

Trinity 2020

Before I begin please would you pray with me?

Loving God,

As we explore your Holy word, come by your Holy Spirit to open our ears so that we may hear what you want us to hear today. Open our minds that we might grow in knowledge of you. Open hearts that we grow in love for you. For we ask in name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Trinity, is the banana peel sermon for all preachers. I could try to use all sorts of images to try and explain the Trinity to our rational minds – the 3 layers of the Mars bar, three forms of water, the 3 leaves of the Shamrock. St Augustine reduced it to a very simple illustration. He used the example of a tree. The root is wood; the trunk is wood; the branches are wood: one wood, one substance but three different

entities. Amen – That would be a noticeably short sermon, hurray, many may say but none of these descriptions do justice to the Holy Mystery that is the Trinity.

Perhaps we could stay in that place of mystery, awe and wonder as we reflect on the Trinity, it is not a bad place to be.

We could praise

- The God of creation which is evident all around us

We could praise

- The Incarnate Jesus who is our redeemer and friend

We could praise

- The Holy Spirit who empowers us to “Go and make disciples...” and is the strength and guidance of God within us.

That might be enough.

My father in law was very good with computers, whenever I had an issue with mine, I would phone him for advice and he would then give me a technical break down of how to fix it, talking about RAM and Gig and bytes. I would say to him – “I don’t want to know how it works; I just want it to work.”

Maybe that is where we get to in our understanding of the Trinity – “I don’t want to know how it works but I just know it does.”

That might be enough ... but it is not because it would not reflect the essence of the Trinity which is love.

The famous Andrew Rublev icon of the Trinity reflects this essence of God. As you study at this icon, you become aware of the how each of the figures seem to be gazing at each other with unqualified dignity, respect, and love – three distinct persons, three yet one.

Rublev depicts this community of love, who are in complete communion with each other. And yet... the fourth side of the table is left open in invitation. We are invited into this loving community. We are invited into this community, but we are sent out from it , to live out God's love in our lives, our homes, and our communities.

It is not love then when:

- A police officer knelt on George Floyd neck for almost nine minutes, killing him and none of his fellow officers tried to stop him
- The leader of the USA, holds up a bible in front of a Church, for a political photo opportunity, to win conservative Christian votes in an election year, after his cavalcade shot rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters, protesting George Floyd's death, in order to get to the church for that photo opportunity.

- the same leader threatens to send the army in to quell the protests
- people are being and have been oppressed, overlooked, disregarded, held back, murdered, and abused because of the colour of their skin.
- Closer to home - it's not love, when we make demeaning comments about the Traveller community and their culture – that is not love that is racism!

These are just a few examples of “it’s not love when...”

I challenge you this week to jot down a few more and pray through them and ask God for forgiveness – we are not immune to racist thoughts even in leafy Surrey. I know I am not – I, was brought up in South Africa during Apartheid!

Professor Jane Elliott, a white American schoolteacher, anti-racism activist and educator once said “There is only one race. The human race.” Jane was responsible

in the latter part of the 20th century for teaching white people about their privilege, what it means to them and what it means to people of colour, and she is still teaching this message today. How do we use our privilege?

I wonder, what image you hold of Jesus in your heads as the second person of the Trinity?

We make a mistake when we assume that Jesus is white skinned, blue-eyed, and blond haired. Indeed, by today's standards Jesus would be considered as a person of colour. Coming from the Middle East he would most likely have been brown skinned, brown eyed and dark haired.

In the Great Commission, Matthew tells us that Jesus exhorts the disciples to 'teach the people to obey everything I have commanded you.' One of those commandments is to 'Love your neighbour...'

When Jesus exhorts us to love our neighbour, he means exactly that, and he does not discriminate.

In the context of what happened to George Floyd and countless other people of colour around the world over hundreds of years,

- loving our neighbour means being mindful of our privilege if we are white
- loving our neighbour means elevating the voices of others above our own; the voices of those who are not like us, those who have no voice; the oppressed, marginalised, forgotten, disregarded and the despised.
- loving our neighbour means elevating the voices of people of colour if we are white, ensuring that our voices don't drown others' out and everyone gets to speak.
- loving our neighbour means turning over tables at injustice.

- loving our neighbour means not settling for the status quo, it means calling out inequality whenever and wherever we see it and it means calling out racism in every aspect of life.

The Black Lives Matter movement has sprung up to challenge the status quo and it has become well-known all over the world. Some people have challenged the Black Lives Matter movement by saying that all lives matter, but when one group of people is excluded, oppressed or silenced, we cannot possibly say that all are equal.

Jesus said, “Love your neighbour”, he did not say “Love your neighbour, except for...”

Friends, let us mind our privilege if we are not people of colour, let us see the Christ in each other, let us raise one another up, let us stand together against injustice and inequality, and let us love each other as members of the same race: The Human Race.

By doing this we will, truly enter into communion and the eternal dance of love with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen